

AED/LearnLink

ICT Applications for Development

AED/LearnLink uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support development. Activities range from public access telecenters to teacher training, professional development, organizational networking, e-commerce, e-government, and institutional capacity building. Lessons from field experiences are shared to contribute to the body of knowledge on using ICTs for development.



Keyword Identifiers: teacher training, IT, computer-mediated training

Purpose: To improve the quality of education by: (a) increasing computer literacy among teachers; (b) providing teacher training colleges with information and communication technologies (ICTs); (c) preparing an online teacher training curriculum based on a student-centered learning approach; and (d) enabling teachers and student teachers with the skills to integrate ICTs into the classroom.

Description: The Connectivity for Educator Development (Connect-ED) project is training selected faculty from the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK) in the use of computers and ICT applications.

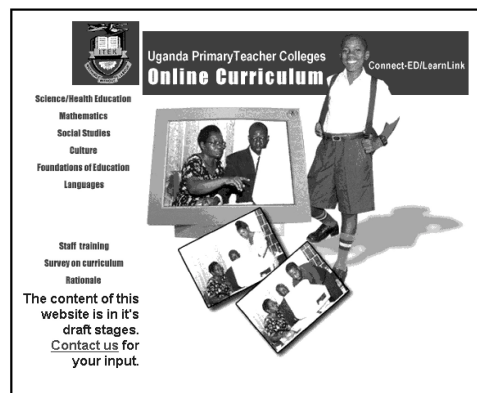


LearnLink trainer Gini Wilderson (far right) addressing the first training group at Connect-ED's User Training Lab

Project staff is developing six online teaching modules for use at ITEK and other teacher training sites. To upgrade facilities, the project helped ITEK construct a new Multimedia User Lab building and equipped the new lab and a refurbished Teacher Training Development Laboratory with ICTs. The ITEK labs will be used to develop multimedia training methods and materials and test their efficacy. One of the first uses will be to revise and digitize the traditional print curriculum in Science and Health Education, Social Studies, Foundations of Education, and three other subjects.



Project staff is creating the first set of six online modules, revised on the basis of teachers' views of "curriculum trouble spots" that were identified during focus groups. After these modules are finalized and available through the project web site, ITEK teachers should be able to continue, without technical assistance, to create new online modules. The ITEK faculty will use the six new modules to train other faculty and student teachers at Primary Teacher Colleges (PTCs) in Kampala, Mukuju, Bushyenyi, Gulu, and, later, elsewhere in the country. Resource development also includes the collection of teaching aides and references for a new and much-needed digital library for teachers that also will be produced on CD-ROM.





ITEK staff opening equipment and software

State-of-the art computer systems will be installed and connections to the Internet established at PTC educational technology centers. Altogether, the six multimedia teacher training modules, a digital reference library, and the educational technology labs will provide valuable resources for improving teacher training.

Expected outcomes: Revising the curriculum, making it accessible via computer, and training teachers in ICT use is expected to begin the process of improving educational quality. In

conjunction with the digitizing of curriculum material, the project hopes to strengthen the shift in pedagogy from teacher-directed to student-centered learning, which teachers can employ more easily in their own classrooms after experiencing it through the project. This will further enhance the benefits of

computer-mediation—individualized pacing, the ability to reach larger numbers of teachers, and individualized, interactive instruction. Over time, ITEK teachers should be able to revise and test their own online curriculum in the two new labs. Also, these teachers should be able to use ICT tools with ease and feel confident in transferring those skills to others. After just an initial training, Connect-ED has energized participants and created a standardized multimedia approach to supplement traditional pre-service teacher education.



Computer training at Connect-ED's User Training Lab at ITEK



LearnLink local staff member training a teacher trainer

Project staff are considering opening PTC technology centers to teachers and students in application schools near PTCs, and educational technology use may increase Internet Provider Service (ISP) activity in towns near the PTCs.

An unintended outcome may be a formulation of standards for determining technology literacy for teachers.

Uganda's ICT program is helping prepare teachers to meet the needs of young students, who already are about 50% of total population, in a modern, technological world. Not only is this the first nationwide, online teacher training program in Uganda, but it also may pave a cost-effective way for replicating teacher training with ICTs throughout Africa.



Resident advisor (second from left) conducting the first training at the Connect-ED User Training Lab at ITEK

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